DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 296 408 CS 506 254

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TITLE Organizational Politics in the News--University Dissent: Power Play or Whistleblowing?
PUB DATE May 88
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (38th, New Orleans, LA, May 29-June 2, 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Research; Conflict; Content Analysis; *Dissent; *Employer Employee Relationship; *Faculty College Relationship; Grievance Procedures; Higher Education; Organizational Change; Organizational Climate; *Organizational Communication; *Political Power; Power Structure
IDENTIFIERS Authority; Communication Behavior; *Communication Strategies; Media Coverage; *Organizational Behavior; Political Communication; Power Struggles; Whistle Blowing

ABSTRACT

Challenge to organizational authority, publicly presented in the local newspaper, can be either enlightening or trying for organizational managers and their public relations staff, depending on their viewpoint. Using a large public university as the organization, a study looked at these challenges and at what factors determine whether an organizational member who chooses to dissent publicly in the community press is more characteristically a power and control political player or a whistleblower. A content analysis of 144 newspaper articles (news and features) published between 1971 and 1986 in a community newspaper in the University of Missouri-Columbia area showed that public political behavior on the campus appears to be a group activity for the purpose of a power or control advantage, which challenges the idea that the dissenters are motivated by altruistic reasoning. Findings also indicate that the political language used in the dissent was opinionated, abstract, and presented negative aspects of the topic or problem instead of providing solutions. These language findings appear to support the view that dissenters are attempting to prevent rather than bring about change. (Four tables of data are included, and 24 references are appended.) (MS)

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ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS IN THE NEWS

UNIVERSITY DISSENT: POWER PLAY OR WHISTLEBLOWING?

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Presented to Organizational Communication Division, International Communication Association, May, 1988, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

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Abstract

Is the organizational member who chooses to dissent publicly in the community press more characteristically a power and control political player or a whistleblower? This question was examined by content analysis of 15 years of local newspaper articles about a large public university in a town where higher education is of major concern.

In this study, the dissent situation is viewed as political behavior in the organization, the dissent as a form of political communication, with the community press acting as a channel through which the dissenter communicates with the organization. Two time periods when major controversies were being aired in the local press were studied along with periods deliberately chosen for lack of such conflicts.

Dissent that becomes news was found to be group-based political behavior aimed at achieving or retaining power in order to prevent change, rather than urge change as might a whistleblower.

ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS IN THE NEWS

UNIVERSITY DISSENT: POWER PLAY OR WHISTLEBLOWING?

> ...the decision is irresponsible...the people won't stand for this...the process here is an atrocity...just because they think they're right doesn't mean they are...if this happens, I just don't want to work here anymore.
>
> --selected statements from an organization's employees, as reported in the community press. *

Challenge to organizational authority, publicly presented in the local newspaper, can be an enlightening or trying problem for organizational managers and their public relations staff. For managers who believe that differing viewpoints on operations ultimately may provide better solutions, the experience may be enlightening--despite the embarrassment that they may feel at the time. For managers who view challenge as negative and interrupting to the smooth flow of work, the public expression can be traumatic. Both, however, have witnessed the public communication manifestation of organizational political behavior.

Political behavior in organizations has been approached by

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*Statements were selected from employees' quotes in news stories published over a three-month period in 1982 in Columbia, Missouri. The protest was in reaction to a proposal for program retrenchment at the University.

various organizational researchers. Porter, Allen and Angle argue that organizational politics consists of "self-serving upward influence activities" (1981) as they propose that organizational political behavior includes:

> ...social influence attempts...that are discretionary (i.e., that are outside the behavioral zones prescribed or prohibited by the formal organization)...that are intended (designed) to promote or protect the self-interests of others (individuals, units). (1981, p. 111)

Drawing on a similar resource-dependency conceptualization, Farrell and Petersen (1982) define political behavior in organizations as those activities that are not required as part of one's organizational role but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization. This definition, they say, is general enough to encompass diverse examples such as whistleblowing, filing of grievances, using symbolic protest gestures, spreading rumors, leaking information to the media and filing lawsuits. The typology they suggest for organizational study includes three key dimensions of political behavior: internal-external, vertical-lateral and legitimate-illegitimate.

For Mayes and Allen, (1979) organizational politics is the management of influence in order to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization--or to obtain sanctioned ends, but through non-sanctioned influence means.

Power and Control

One major approach that is taken in the organizational behavior literature focuses on a power and control concept.

Mowday (1978) views skillful political behavior as a way for individuals with relatively low power to compensate for their power disadvantage. Lipsky (1968) sees relatively powerless groups involving third parties in order to create favorable bargaining resources for the relatively powerless group. Pertinent to the research study at hand, Lipsky visualizes a major role of the communications media as a means of pressuring the organizational target into more favorable action. Mechanic (1962) notes that it is not unusual for some organizational employees to wield considerable power and influence that is not associated with their formally defined positions in an organization, while Lyles and Mitroff (1980) found that even fear of losing political power plays a role in an individual's behavior in an organization. Kipnis and Schmidt (1980) have investigated organizational politics by studying the ways in which people at work influence their colleagues and superiors to obtain either parochial personal benefits or satisfy organizational goals.

One stream of the organizational theory approach to power draws heavily upon the concept of power-dependence relationships. As outlined by Emerson, social relationships involve mutual dependence and "power resides implicitly in

the other's dependence." (1962) The strategic contingencies' theory of intraorganizational power, first presented by Hickson, et al., (1981) and developed further by Salancik and Pfeffer (1974) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1977) states that individuals or departments in an organization gain power when they contribute most to solving critical organizational problems.

The Whistleblowing Perspective

Generally defined as reporting of wrongdoing rather than more general opposition to administrative action or policy, the tactic of whistleblowing, in which an employee informs a government agency or the mass media of alleged abuse in the organization, has attracted the attention of organization and communication researchers since about 1980. The theoretical work in this area provides understanding of the public availability of organization members in speaking out on organization matters.

In the political behavior literature, whistleblowing has been described as a bureaucratic insurgency movement, (Zald and Berger, 1978) which challenges the efficacy of existing norms, where organizational rules and procedures are violated without violence and where participants are middle managers and professionals who find linkages with external supporters. Whistleblowing has been defined as behavior that occurs over a concern that the organization is in conflict with societal norms (Aram and

Salipante, 1981) and as an external-vertical-illegitimate dimenssional organization activity. (Farrell and Peterson, 1982)

From the perspective of socio-psychological behavior, a second path of explanation for whistleblowing research, whistleblowing may be seen as a highly individual act because of a group inhibition (Lantane and Darley, 1968), or as requiring group support, as the result of high group cohesion. (Rutkowski, Gruder and Romer, 1983). It can be seen as a violation of reference group norms (Schwartz et al., 1970; Gelfand et al., 1968) and the result of individual needs, such as affiliation (Schwartz et al., 1970) or dominance (Dalton and Todor, 1979) or risk taking (Hoyman and Stallworth, 1982) or lack of fear of isolation. (Andreasen and Thompson, 1985)

METHOD

The study was a content analysis of 144 newspaper articles (news and features) published between 1971 and 1986 in a community newspaper where the study organization, the University of Missouri-Columbia, is located. Dissent is defined as negative comment on the organization. The article is the unit of analysis. The choice of a public university as a case in point, with faculty members to be studied as dissenters, provides heightening of potential effects. The relative openness of the public work organization compared with the private organization and the historic relative freedom of speech that accompanies faculty status, can be

expected to yield the wealth of data required for this investigation.

A university setting and faculty membership also adapt well to the observations of Perrucci (1980), who found that whistleblowing is likely to occur in organizations where professionals have work roles that are more general than narrow.

In order to further heighten availability and richness of data and provide comparison within the study, four time periods were sampled.

Two time periods, with 36 articles selected from each, were purposefully chosen because they cover periods of extreme conflict at the University.

A second set of time periods was chosen to provide a lower number of single-issue conflicts.

Topics of concern were coded in one of four categories. "General policy and planning" included reference to organizational goals and priorities, the organization's relationship with its environment--community, region, state, nation, agencies--and production policies. Production policies in the field of education included such topics as curriculum debates or student assessment policies. "Traditional personnel practices" included reference to hiring, firing, promotion, employee health and safety. "Employee quality of life" referred to physical environment

such as parking and buildings and offices, division of authority or responsibility, and "voice" processes such as those in decision making. "Fiscal practices" included reference to resource allocation to units, to individuals or business policies and procedures such as audits or accounting.

Targets of the dissent were coded in two sets of dichotomous variables:

1) Organizational norms violations vs. social norms violations, and

2) Abusive persons vs. abusive rules.

The organizational norm violation-social norm violation variable stems from the Aram and Salipante (1981) schema. In discussing due process systems for organizations confronting conflict, Aram and Salipante identify three types of employer-employee conflicts: those involving statutory rights (legal recourse issues), grievances involving organizational norms (e.g., internal norms including unfair treatment in diverse areas as salary and promotion, the power of work groups), and conflicts involving societal norms (e.g., whistleblowing that has its basis in the context of morals or norms of the generalized society). The abusive persons-abusive rules variable utilizes Deena Weinstein's argument that there are "other grounds than norm infraction on which bureaucratic oppositions are based." (Weinstein, 1979, p. 26.)

Communication tactics are analyzed with six scaled variables, each providing a percentage continuum. The scaled items are described below.

1) "I" to "we" scale. Is it more appropriate to view the public organizational dissenter as representative of a social movement, as Zald and Berger (1978) have suggested, or as an individual political act? Explanation for whistleblowing behavior that relies upon socio-psychological literature portrays the whistleblower both as a highly individual actor and one prompted by group cohesion. Which path best describes the organizational dissenter?

2) Defensive to offensive scale. This scale indicates whether dissenters are speaking "from" (e.g., our interests are being violated) or speaking "to" (e.g., you should do something). A finding that dissent is predominantly defensive lends support to the power and control conceptualization of political behavior, particularly as articulated by Mowday (1978), who sees political behavior as a way for those of low power to compensate for their power disadvantage, and Lyles and Mitroff (1980), who found that fear of losing political power can play a role in an individual's organizational behavior. A defensive finding also supports Weinstein's conceptualization of bureaucratic opposition (1979), which emphasizes opposition as occurring when the organizational member does not acquiesce in the decisions made by others. An offensive predominance may indicate that the organizational dissenter is behaving

in the pattern of the whistleblower, who initiates the public issue.

Both I-we and defensive-offensive scales are indicators of types of political behavior; four other scales were designed to explore the nature of the argument as political language.

3) Informative to opinionated scale, indicating that the tactic being used in speaking out is predominately to provide factual information or to express more generalized opinion.

4) Abstract to specific scale, indicating that the communication tactic is to speak in general, abstract language (e.g., reference to "the administration") or specific reference (e.g., "the president").

5) Solution to dissolution scale, indicating that the dissenter is speaking in positive terms by presenting a favorable solution or in negative terms by presenting an unfavorable presentation of the problem.

6) Low to high intensity scale, indicating that the dissenter is moderately (e.g., using words such as "might," "may") or highly assertive (e.g., using "must," "must not").

Analysis and Reliability

Chi-square tests of frequency counts, were appropriate for analysis of the data. A purposeful sample of eight articles, two from each time period, showed a coder and judge agreement of .80; intracoder reliability was .90.

RESULTS

Dissent Topics

Over the 15-year period covered in this study, topics that related to University policy or planning issues dominated the newspaper coverage of dissent at the University. As Table 1 shows, these topics accounted for 56 of the 144 articles, followed in rank by issues related to quality of life at the University (34 articles), fiscal practices (30), and personnel practices (24).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Dissent Targets

The most common target of the dissenters' discontent was norms that were specific to the work organization itself rather than those norms that appear to violate general societal rules (128 articles vs. 16). When societal norms were the basis for criticism of University action, matters of affirmative action tended to be at issue.

The other target category explored whether the target of the dissent was an individual person or a particular rule or policy. Complaints in this study focused primarily on rules that the dissenters found abusive (85 articles) rather than on abusive persons (59 articles). In many cases, abusive rules were, in fact, proposed rules. When they were not proposals for restructuring, reallocation or a new

"academic plan," however, rules found abusive included how faculty performance is determined and then rewarded.

Communication Tactics

The general overview of communication tactics used by the dissenters as illustrated in the articles shows a pattern of use of "we" rather than "I" in source quotations; a posture of defensiveness indicating that the dissenters were reacting to issues rather than creating them; a rhetoric of opinion rather than that of providing information; a general tendency to speak in abstract terminology rather than specific; and a general tendency to express negative points on an issue rather than provide a solution to a problem (see Table 1).

The use of "we" often came about as the result of faculty members voting upon resolutions, offering petitions, statements by a department, or the reporter offering "the sense of the committee." "I" examples included the expected "I" think....," "I feel that...," "I would have preferred...," "I must conclude that..." as well as one individual's prediction about "we": "I'm sure the faculty will take a vote of 'no confidence'."

The defensiveness posture taken by dissenters is reflected in the following examples from a variety of headlines: "MU seethes over report...(faculty) attacks two 'misconceptions' in plan...urges delay...challenges basis of...questions implications...cool to." The offensive was

taken by dissenters in passing a resolution "to assess the administrative structure" in one instance; through a report of a task force critical of the "grants and application process" in another, and the establishment of a task force on budget matters. In one case, faculty sources brought up an unresolved issue by uncovering a new angle: if the administration did not act soon on the AAUP censure, the local Phi Beta Kappa chapter could be suspended.

When dissenters were quoted providing factual information, there were instances of how many graduate students might be affected by a particular policy, or an explanation of an accreditation issue. But more often, the dissenters expressed more generalized opinions on topics: "Morale stinks here;" or a description of an administrative proposal as "a power grab," or suggesting that "we're on the brink of extinction."

Abstract references outnumbered the specific; "quality...the administration...the University...the students...they...the budget process...Jesse Hall (administration building)" among those used most often. When dissenters were specific, they often targeted an individual, as in, "Chancellor Uehling promised...she said she would...."

Most often, dissenters were quoted in a state of dissolution, or when they provided an unfavorable presentation of the problem or topic at hand. For example,

the affirmative action office "has failed to..." or "Who's going to come save our school?" The latter referred to recent budget cuts by the Governor. Solutions were offered in other cases. The faculty member who exposed the practice of surveillance cameras in the area of a coin-operated soda machine asked that "guidelines" for use of such equipment be established rather than simply chastising the administration. Another creative solution presentation, used more than once, was for the faculty dissenter to present information, or an opinion, that denied a problem exists. One example of this technique was the faculty member who denied that financial reallocation was needed to rectify the problem of an underpaid faculty. He reasoned, with cost-of-living figures, that the faculty at this particular university was not underpaid at all.

Dissent arguments were presented with varying degrees of intensity, ranging from the mild, "I'm hoping there will be discussion on it," to "cease and desist." Of all the communication tactics studied, only intensity was presented in the articles with a semblance of balance; more articles were coded as including an equal number of "low" and "high" intensity argumentation than were categorized as either solely "low" or solely "high."

Topics And Conflict

Chi-square tests on the topic categories (policy and planning, personnel practices, quality of life and fiscal

practices) by time period showed significant differences between conflict and non-conflict, between early years and later years, within the early years and within the two conflict time periods (Table 2).

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Overall, there were more policy and planning topics (X^2=41.63; p<.001) than would have been expected by chance alone; also, there were fewer instances of personnel practice topics.

In comparing conflict with non-conflict time periods (X^2=25.17; p<.001), topics related to policy and planning were more likely to appear in the conflict periods while personnel practices and fiscal practices had unusually high emphasis during the non-conflict times.

In testing to see whether there was a difference within these conflict/non-conflict groups, only the conflict groups produced a significant difference (X^2=8.23; p<.05). The first conflict period (1970s' Role and Scope) produced more than expected articles related to policy and planning; and the 1980s' reallocation conflict produced more fiscally related topics.

A difference between the two conflict episodes was further verified by a comparison ($x^2$8.56; p<.05) between early and late time periods that each contained a single conflict.

The overall result, however, suggests that the

existence of conflict makes a difference in article topic: the chi-square difference between conflict and non-conflict groups was greater than the difference within the groups.

Targets and Conflict

No pattern of conflict vs. non-conflict was established by results for dissent targets--whether normative violation or abuse target.

Tactics and Conflict

Four of the six communication tactic variables coded showed patterns related to time periods and/or conflict episodes: the use of "I" or "we," the use of defensive argument rather than taking the offensive, the use of abstract rather than specific reference, and the intensity of the argument being presented. Those unrelated to time, statistically, were whether a dissenter was speaking informatively or opinionatedly and whether offering a solution or speaking negatively of the issue (Table 3).

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

"I" and "We"

The time period relationship with the use of "I" and "we" (x^2=15.63; p,.Ø2) comes about due to the difference in two conflict periods (x^2=7.46; p,.Ø5). Overall findings show that use of "we" is most frequent and this is true for all time periods. However, one of the conflict periods provides more than the expected incidence of an equal use of

both "I" and "we" in the articles with a reduction in the expected frequency of "we" alone.

Defensive and Offensive

A clear contribution to the relationship of time period with the use of defensive and offensive tactics (X^2=28.21; p<.001) comes from the difference between conflict time periods and non-conflict time periods (X^2=23.45; p<.001). The conflict periods provided evidence of defensive behavior, while relatively calm periods revealed more incidence of dissenters taking the initiative on issues.

Abstract and Specific

Abstract language use made up the largest percentage of tactics coded in this category. In the time period comparison (X^2=13.48; p<.05), the trend in that pattern was reversed by the second conflict period, with more specific references evident. In the final time period, references to specific individuals, for example, kept pace with abstract references.

Intensity

Dissent articles contained a larger number of "equal" codings in the level-of-intensity category than did any other communication tactic variable. In general, the articles balanced this particular tactic. Although the result of the time periods was not significant, it is interesting to note that more instances of high intensity were evident in the early time period years with a reversal of that pattern in later

years.

There was no difference in intensity between conflict and non-conflict years, but in a comparison within the conflict episodes (X^2=7.22; p<.Ø5), the early conflict is characterized by a higher intensity than is the later conflict period.

The Dissenters: Role-Prescribed Behavior

Dissenters whose names appeared in the newspaper articles were predominantly those who had a particular role to perform (95 of a total 131 individuals recorded). Of those, the majority (62) were identified with a particular issue, such as a member of a department that was being subjected to administrative criticism (Table 4). Thirty-six of those performing roles as they were speaking were serving in such positions as chair of the faculty council, a committee chair, or as a member of such councils or committees.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the Dissenter

Dissenter as a Role Player

In this study, the faculty dissenter primarily appeared in articles in the community newspaper as an individual in

an organization who could be identified logically, by reporter or reader, with a particular issue being discussed. In other words, the faculty dissenter served as a source with a particular role to play. Two types of roles were identified; about two-thirds of the dissenters who played a role did so by being connected with the particular issue under discussion. With policy topics as one of the most common topic categories and defensiveness as the most prevalent communication tactic,the overall picture of the faculty dissenter is one of response to administrative overtures toward change.

A second role played was that of University official. In this role, the dissenter was most often a faculty council chairman or chairman of a committee or task force. Here, the dissenter emulated the whistleblowing findings (Miceli and Near, 1984) that some whistleblowers held inspector-type organizational positions in which, by virtue of the position held, they would have "surveillance" tasks assigned to them. In the case of a university, however, the surveillance is more likely assigned by the faculty governance system than by management.

A question arises that is worthy of further research consideration: does the same mix of issue role and official role exist in coverage of a non-public business organization? Has this finding largely been the result of the public funding status of the organization or is it founded in the nature of organizational dissent?

Characteristics of the Communication

Dissent Targets

Identifying the targets of the dissenters is a means toward understanding why the public opposition to the organization takes place. In this study, an attempt was made to find out if the norms that the faculty members felt were being violated were those that were specific to the organization or whether the protest had its roots in general societal morals or norms. In addition to the question of possible violation of norms, the study looked at whether the faculty members were opposing primarily bureaucratic rules that govern the organization or whether they were opposing the way in which individuals were administering the rules.

The Organization or Society

Overwhelmingly, the dissent in this study focused upon the organizational norms, providing a picture of an insular organization. The general consistency over the time periods of the study, even when there were no major conflicts posed by administrative proposals, suggests that the concern of faculty members over organizational operation falls very much within the confines of the organization itself.

Organizational norms, as described in the Aram and Salipante typology (1981) used in the study, include grievances over internal norms such as unfair treatment, and the power of work groups. Dissenters saw unfairness and faculty power losses in all areas of University operation--policy and

planning, quality of life, fiscal practices, and personnel practices--as the lack of difference among topics suggests.

It also appeared to matter little to the dissenters whether the norm violation is perpetrated by a rule or a person, and a similar, "no-difference" finding regarding communication tactics suggests that the dissenter will choose the communication tactic that fits a particular situation rather than base the choice more generally on the type of violation he or she is protesting.

Abusive Rules, Abusive Persons

Rules of the organization, more than the persons who administered the rules, became the dissent target most commonly found in this study. However, the approximate 60 to 40 percent proportion lends less conclusive evidence to the finding than might be helpful in interpretation. Of even less help are the findings that neither abuse target can be identified with a time period, intense conflict, story origin or with dissent topic being addressed. Looking at the qualitative information gathered, however, there appears to be a pattern that the rules being protested are predominately proposed, not established, rules. And, some persons being accused of abuse may be coded abusive because they are proposing those rules. The picture, then, is one of dissent prompted in reaction to potential change in life within the organization, and this is a question worthy of further consideration by organizational researchers.

Most important, however, in relation to abuse targets is the finding that related to communication and political behavior tactics.

When the target was a rule, or proposed rule, of the organization, the dissenters' response was formed as a social movement (the use of "we" in the arguments) and tended to be reactive to a move by the administration (the use of "defensiveness"). Further, to combat the rule, dissenters tended to present information rather than opinion, and to speak in abstract terminology (e.g., "quality," "the University," "responsibility").

The tactics, when aimed at an abusive person, then, are the opposite. This picture is one of attack. The dissenter is careful not to involve others in the attack, however (use of "I"). The abusive person is most likely named (use of specific references) and is being urged to "do something about" a situation (use of offensive tactic). And, in dealing with an individual, the dissenter as source presents opinion rather than information.

In the dissent articles, then, the reader is presented with sources who deal with persons individually and emotionally but with rules not only in the protection of a group but also, perhaps, with greater detachment. A remaining research question is whether this situation is one prompted by the dissenter as source or prompted by journalistic practices.

Dissent Topics

The identification of dissent topics in this study, was approached with little guidance from the literature, but as abduction--to develop opportunities for future research consideration. The results have provided that potential.

The first area to consider is the role of intensive conflict. Policy and planning, the most observed topic, was found in the intensive conflict periods to follow--and differ by--the agenda set by the administrative proposals that spawned the dissent. In the first conflict period, the 1970s Role and Scope proposal to establish a four-campus academic plan, the dissenters' topic remained that of policy and planning. In the other intensive conflict period, the 1980s reallocation of budgetary resources that would occur by a policy of eliminating some academic programs, the difference was greater incidence of the fiscal practice topic. No major attempts to replace or obfuscate the administrators' basis for the proposals appear in the newspaper coverage of dissenters' arguments. Some questions raised by this conclusion are whether this agenda following is consistent among universities, whether there is a relationship with success of the administrative proposals, and whether the effect is consistent in organizations outside higher education.

Also related to the role of conflict is the finding that personnel and fiscal practice topics (with the

exception of the one fiscal-related conflict) were more likely to be addressed in the time periods of lesser conflict intensity. The finding may indicate that, during more normal times in the life of an organization, these management areas will be those to which, if an administrator wants to avoid public dissent, special attention should be paid.

Several communication tactics were found to be related to the topic being addressed in the dissent. When policy and planning issues were in the news, the dissenters tended to be defensive--to complain that their rights were being violated. In all other topic areas, dissenters tended to take the offensive by demanding that something be done about the issue. The conclusion appears to be that the dissenters react to administrative proposals, but behave more like the whistleblower as Lea Stewart (1980) has described in the areas of quality of life, personnel and fiscal practices. Stewart found that the whistleblower first attempted to resolve a problem within the organization but when this met with failure, resorted to external options. A question worthy of future research, then, is, how these topic areas relate to the dissenter who says, "I'm fed up," and goes public with his or her complaint.

Two other communication tactic findings support common-sense conclusions. When quality of life is the topic, the argumentation is most likely to be opinionated; when fiscal practices or policy are addressed, information is the basis

of the argument. The subjective nature of quality of life issues, including the universal university concern of a voice in governance, explains the opinion finding. Similarly, the more concrete areas of policy and finance can be met best with disputing facts. Also, when dissenters most often present solutions to the problem raised, they are addressing personnel practices or quality of life. In these areas, solutions--whether acceptable or not--are more easily uncovered, e.g., not firing an individual or adding a faculty member to an administrative task force.

A CONCLUDING NOTE

General Behavior

Based on frequencies over the 15 years of newspaper coverage portraying dissent at the University, public political behavior on the campus appears to be a group activity (the use of "we") for the purpose of a power or control advantage (the use of "defensive"). The power and control advantage finding, of course, challenges the idea that the dissenters are motivated by altruistic reasoning. Further, it indicates that the dissenters, having taken the approach that their rights were being violated, are in a position to prevent change rather than being in the altruistic position to bring about change. Nor are the dissenters behaving, as Deena Weinstein (1979) proposes, as reformists.

Overall, the political language used in the dissent was opinionated, abstract, and presented negative aspects of the

topic or problem instead of providing solutions. The finding that articles, overall, contained more "equal" amounts of intensity may indicate that political language use is situational or, more likely, that editorial concerns over balance are particularly keen on this measure.

These language findings appear to support the view that dissenters are attempting to prevent rather than bring about change, thus providing a hypothesis that is worthy of future research investigation both within the university organization setting and the more traditional business organization.

TABLE 1

THE VARIABLES:
FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE

		Frequency	Percentage of Total In Category
Topic:			
	Policy	56	38%
	Quality of Life	34	24%
	Fiscal Practices	30	21%
	Personnel Practices	24	17%
Story Origin:			
	Source-Reporter Contact	90	63%
	Event Coverage	35	24%
	Combination Reporter/Event	17	12%
	Unknown	2	1%
Target:			
a.	Organizational Norm	128	89%
	Social Norm	16	11%
b.	Abusive Rules	85	59%
	Abusive Person(s)	59	41%
Communication Tactic:			
a.	I	34	24%
	We	90	63%
	Equal use of I/We	20	13%
b.	Defensive	85	59%
	Offensive	49	34%
	Equal Use	10	7%
c.	Informative	20	13%
	Opinionated	77	53%
	Equal Use	47	33%
d.	Abstract	70	49%
	Specific	55	38%
	Equal Use	19	13%
e.	Solution	40	27%
	Dissolution	92	65%
	Equal Use	12	8%
f.	Low Intensity	48	33%
	High Intensity	39	27%
	Equal Use	57	40%

TABLE 2*

DISSENT TOPIC AND TIME PERIOD

	Policy and Planning	Personnel Practices	Quality of Life	Fiscal Practices
Time Period 1	26	2	7	1
Time Period 2	7	13	8	8
Time Period 3	16	5	8	7
Time Period 4	7	4	11	14
			$X^2 = 41.63$	$p<.001$
Conflict Periods				
(1 and 3)	42	7	15	8
Non-Conflict Periods				
(2 and 4)	14	17	19	22
			$X^2 = 25.17$	$p<.001$
Within Conflict				
Time Period 1	26	2	7	1
Time Period 3	16	5	8	7
			$X^2 = 8.23$	$p<.05$
Early Periods				
(1 and 2)	33	15	15	9
Late Periods				
(3 and 4)	23	9	19	21
			$X^2 = 8.56$	$p<.05$
Within Early Periods				
Time Period 1	26	2	7	1
Time Period 2	7	13	8	8
			$X^2 = 24.52$	$p<.001$

*Note: Tables 2 and 3 contain only comparisons that have reached the critical value for level of significance.

TABLE 3

COMMUNICATION TACTICS AND TIME PERIOD

	I	We	Equal
Time Period 1	10	24	2
Time Period 2	9	25	2
Time Period 3	11	15	10
Time Period 4	4	26	6
		$X^2 = 15.63$	p<.02
Within Conflict			
Time Period 1	10	24	2
Time Period 3	11	15	10
		$X^2 = 7.46$	p<.05

	Defensive	Offensive	Equal
Time Period 1	29	6	1
Time Period 2	11	22	3
Time Period 3	27	5	4
Time Period 4	18	16	2
		$X^2 = 28.21$	p<.001
Conflict Periods			
(1 and 3)	56	11	5
Non-Conflict Periods			
(2 and 4)	29	38	5
		$X^2 = 23.45$	p<.001

	Abstract	Specific	Equal
Time Period 1	17	14	5
Time Period 2	25	10	1
Time Period 3	12	15	9
Time Period 4	16	16	4
		$X^2 = 13.49$	p<.05

	Low Intensity	High Intensity	Equal
Within Conflict			
Time Period 1	7	15	14
Time Period 3	17	7	12
		$X^2 = 7.23$	p<.05

TABLE 4

DISSENTER CATEGORIES BY TIME PERIOD

	University Role	Issue Role	No Role	Unnamed[1]	Time Period Total
Time Period 1	8	5	8	6	27
Time Period 2	4	10	12	5	31
Time Period 3	10	32	6	2	50
Time Period 4	14	17	15	2	48
	36*	64**	41***	15	

[1]Unnamed category total does not include those sources who were quoted as speaking in large meetings or public events, where the reporter might be unable to identify the speaker. Four such sources appeared in Time Period 3; 1 in Time Period 1.

*Includes 3 sources repeating across time periods.

**Includes 2 sources repeating across time periods.

***Includes 5 sources repeating across time periods.

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